between India and Pakistan could be explored when dialogue between the two countries resumes, and that in such a context Pakistan could consider the question of 20 fugitives from law being sought by India.

However, during the visit to India of Pakistan President Parvez Musharraf, in July 2001, Home Minister, Shri L.K. Advani, had specifically proposed to the latter the conclusion of an Extradition Treaty between India and Pakistan. The President of Pakistan turned down the suggestion arguing that such a Treaty was possible only after the normalization of relations between the two countries.

It is quite clear that the recent suggestions from Pakistan for an extradition treaty are only meant for propaganda purposes and to delay action on the 20 fugitives from law.

(b) and (c) Pakistan leaders have been calling for a resumption of dialogue with India, even while Pakistan continues to sponsor cross border terrorism in India and its leaders justify continued terrorist violence in Jammu & Kashmir.

India has always desired the establishment of good neighbourly ties with Pakistan and for this purpose is committed to resuming the Composite Dialogue initiated by us in 1998. It is for Pakistan to end its sponsorship of cross border terrorism and take urgent action of the list of 20 fugitives of law, so that appropriate conditions for a meaningful dialogue process are created.

Pakistans invitation to Home Minister

3877. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan's Interior Minister lately invited the Union Home Minister to visit Islamabad;

(b) if so, in what context such invitation was spelt out and what was its implication; and

(c) what was the Home Minister's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) In March this year, during the 2nd SAARC Information Minister's conference held at Islamabad, the Pakistan media carried a report indicating that the Pakistan Interior Minister had extended an invitation to the Union Home Minister, Shri L.K. Advani. There was also a suggestion in these reports, that the Pakistan Interior Minister proposed discussions on the issue of de-escalation of tensions with India and on the list of 20 fugitives from law. Subsequently, a senior Pakistan Interior Ministry official was also quoted in the media confirming the fact that such an invitation had indeed been extended.

Pakistan leaders frequently indulge in such propagandist ploys, especially during international conference in their attempt to divert international attention from Pakistan's continued sponsorship and involvement with cross border terrorism in India. Pakistan also seeks to divert attention from the fact that it has not taken any action on the list of 20 fugitives from law, handed over to them on 31st December, 2001.

Government have consistently stated their commitment to establishing good neighbourly ties with Pakistan, and for this purpose to resume the Composite Dialogue that seeks to build trust and confidence, establish a stable structure of cooperation and address outstanding issues. Pakistan must end its sponsorship of cross border terrorism and take urgent action on the list of 20 fugitives from law so that appropriate conditions for a meaningful dialogue process are created.

Ratification of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with America

3878. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1248 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 14th March, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government propose early ratification of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty signed by the two countries; and

(b) if so, the measures taken in this regard?